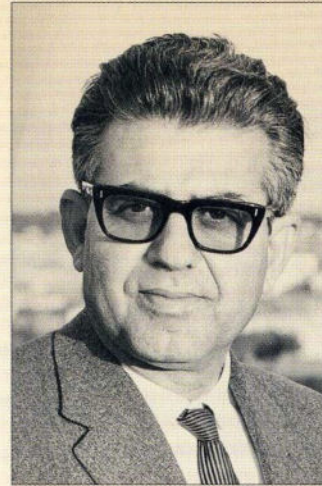


Ανδρέας Νικολαΐδης
Andreas Nicolaides



Andreas Nicolaides, known to many as "the Government Photographer", was born at Lapithos on January 6th 1926.

His father, George Hadjisavva Nicolaides, and his mother, Agathi, had four children : Andreas, Theodoros, Christakis and Melpomene. Andreas served his country for many years as a government photoreporter, Theodoros as a Public Works employee and Christakis as a Police officer and Police photographer. Melpomene has been living as a refugee in Limassol since 1974. George Hadjisavva Nicolaides was the cousin of Ioannis Tsangarides, a Cypriot officer in the Greek army.

Andreas spent his childhood in the enchanting environment of Lapithos, helping his father, who was a farmer, with agricultural work in the fragrant orchards of Lapithos. He attended the village Elementary School and then the Kyrenia Gymnasium, travelling there on his bicycle every day.

After he left school in 1944, during the Second World War, Andreas enlisted in the British Royal Air Force with the aim of becoming a pilot. In the end, however, he became a mechanic specialised in the repair of the aircraft engines. He remained in the British Royal Air Force until the end of the Second World War, in 1945. This service was decisive for his future and his career because it was then that he had his first lessons in photography. From that moment the magic of photography won his heart.

After the Air Force he worked for about two years for an Anglo-German company that was prospecting for oil in Cyprus.

In 1947 he was appointed to the Public Information Office as assistant film-maker to the P.I.O. mobile film unit. This unit went round the various villages of Cyprus showing instructive/educational films on farming, health and the environment, as well as News Reels from Great Britain.

The head of the film unit and the photographic section of the Office was the unforgettable Polys Constantinides, who assigned Andreas Nicolaides the task of photographing various landscapes, dignitaries and government officials

At the beginning of the 1950s Andreas Nicolaides was transferred from the film unit to the photographic section as Assistant Photographer, and he remained there until he retired. After the retirement of Polys Constantindes in 1960, Andreas Nicolaides was promoted to head the Photographic Section of the Public Information Office.

In the period before 1960 the section was not very busy. Its work was limited to taking portrait photographs of

Government officials, giving photographic coverage of the arrival of dignitaries and to publicising the work of the Government.

After the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, the work of the Photographic Section of the Public Information Office was upgraded significantly. Thus Andreas Nicolaides experienced at close hand and immortalised important moments of recent Cypriot history and also of economic and social development and activity.

He immortalised the historic moments that marked the end of the long subjection of Cyprus, the withdrawal of the British and the great celebrations of the people of Cyprus on the acquisition of their independence. Since he was the official state photographer he had the exclusive right of access to places where other photographers could not go.

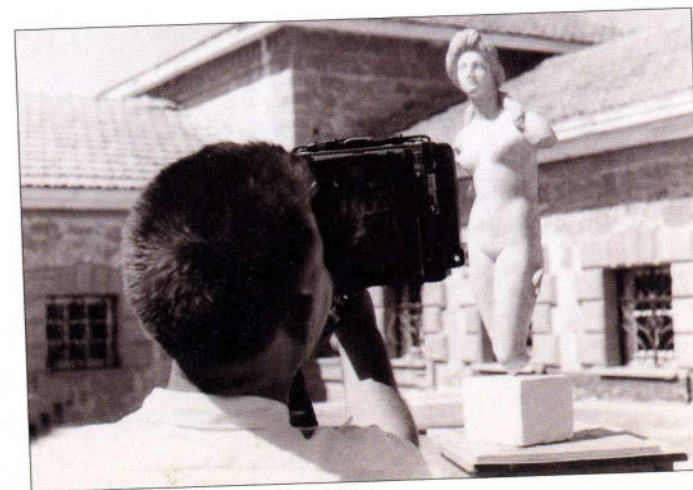
His photographs of the signing of the agreements, of the official ceremonies in the Cypriot House of Representatives and the official celebrations in August 1960, constitute valuable, historical photographic material for us today and have been published in many books, newspapers and magazines all over the world.

There followed the first creative years 1960-1963, the Turkish Cypriot uprising in 1963, the inter-communal clashes, the bombing of Tillyria by the Turkish Air Force in 1964, the tragic events of 1967, the inter-communal talks 1968-1974, the illegal operations of the National Front and EOKA B, the treasonous coup d'état and the barbaric Turkish invasion of July 1974 with all its tragic and disastrous consequences.

Andreas Nicolaides dashed everywhere to cover all the events, focusing on the President of the Republic Archbishop Makarios and other state officials. The thousands of photographs he took are indisputable evidence of the events and are used extensively in the preparation of material to inform international public opinion on the dramatic developments in Cyprus.

He also accompanied President Makarios on his official visits to Syria, Egypt, Libya and Algeria, and President Spyros Kyprianou on his official visit to Syria.

Besides current events, however, Andreas Nicolaides also photographed the natural beauty of Cyprus, its historical and archaeological monuments, social and economic activities, cultural events and even unusual operations at the Nicosia general hospital. Thus the photographic archive of the Press and Information Office constitutes valuable material on Cypriot developments from 1945 to the present day.



We asked Andreas Nicolaides to recall and recount to us some incidents in his professional career that are printed indelibly in his memory.

"In the performance of my duties," he said, "I was quite often physically at risk, mainly from being pushed by colleagues or by the crowd. On two occasions, however, I escaped from the jaws of death at the last moment.



The first occasion was in the early 70s when we received orders to go to Paphos to cover some development works from a helicopter. I boarded the only helicopter there was in Cyprus with Andreas Koutas, my colleague from the Office, and the pilot Zacharias Papadoyiannis. He was the personal pilot of Archbishop Makarios and, as is well known, was shortly afterwards seriously wounded in an assassination attempt on President Makarios near the Archbishopric in 1970.

While we were flying to Paphos over the Troodos mountain range, strange noises were heard and the helicopter began to lose height. Papadoyiannis managed to land it in a vineyard at Agros and by the time we managed to get away by running through the vineyard we were scratched and bleeding from the vines...

On another occasion I was accompanying President Makarios on a visit to Karpasia when a bomb exploded just a few metres from my car. It was one of many attempts on the life of the President by EOKA B'.

I was in the greatest danger, however, and was seriously wounded during the treasonous coup d'état on July 15th 1974. On the morning of the coup I went to the Presidential Palace to photograph the visit to His Beatitude of children from the Greek schools in Cairo. After the attack on the Palace and all resistance put up by the police guard had been overcome, those taking part in the coup entered the building and got out all of us who were inside, hitting us in a frenzy. They forced us to lie face down on the burning hot asphalt in the forecourt, while they set fire to the building. At one moment I raised my head and looked at my car, which I had only just bought. I was attacked by the coup participants, who hit me savagely with their rifle butts, calling me "Priest's photographer". They searched me and took my personal effects and my wallet. Their blows caused a severe head wound and four broken ribs.

After some hours they took me with others to the Army Command Headquarters and in the evening, although I was in pain, they dumped me, alone and helpless at the traffic lights by the Kalispera building. From there I slowly dragged myself to a relative's house nearby and there I received first aid and stayed for three days before returning to my home to get medical treatment".

Andreas Nicolaides does not have a personal archive. The thousands of photographs that passed through his hands are in the photographic archive of the Press and Information Office. A gentle, affable and courteous man, he was always willing to carry out his demanding duties uncomplainingly.

His knowledge of photography was enriched and broadened both by his great experience and his connection with the New York Institute of Photography, from where he received a Certificate with distinction in 1969.

He began his career using a bellows camera and then gradually proceeded to using a Rolleiflex (6x6 cm), a Haseblatt (6x6cm) and later Pentax, Nikon and Minolta 35mm cameras.

Andreas Nicolaides married Nitsa Mavroyianni from Kaimakli in 1958 and has two children: Irene, who studied sociology and foreign languages and teaches at a university in the U.S.A., and Antonis, who studied mechanical engineering and works in Nicosia as manager of a large firm. His two children have given him three grandchildren so far. Since his retirement from the Civil Service he has been living in the country, at Analiondas, and working in his orchard, which reminds him of the agricultural work of his childhood at Lapithos, far from the tension of the events which he immortalised for 40 whole years.



Σκαπανεείς της Κυπριακής Φωτοδημοσιογραφίας

ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ • ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΤΙΚΕΣ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΕΣ

